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"Getting to know you," to borrow from a popular song, is one of the most pleasurable experiences for me as Director. I've only been here eight months, and I know that there are still many of you I've not yet met, but hardly a day goes by that I don't have contact with one of you for the first time. I especially value these personal meetings, and I appreciate the support you are giving me.

In addition to these individual contacts and the more impersonal ones via TV, talks in the "bubble" and other forums, I have been meeting almost weekly with representative groups, and, as time allows, following the suggestions they have made to "pop in" on offices unannounced - (with sometimes surprising results) - and to receive personalized individual presentations, or to lunch with employees. I continue to meet with Chiefs of Station, and on trips here or abroad I've made a special effort to meet as many of you as possible. Frankly, I've found these contacts rewarding, interesting, informative and stimulating. I intend to continue them.

Perhaps you've already had some "feed back" from my meetings with the several Management Advisory Groups (MAGs) or with less structured groups of employees. I intend to continue these weekly sessions. I want to revisit the MAGs to be sure they are aware of what's happened to their earlier suggestions, and to

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invite their thoughts about our future. More than 41 suggestions were compiled from my earlier meetings with them. Each has been considered; many have been implemented; others are still under review.

Some of the suggestions I was able to implement quickly included: Increasing the number of copies of my Notes from the Director so that one is available for every employee, and expanding its content to include Agency accomplishments and information on initiatives, programs and options under consideration; Relaxation of time-in-grade standards to provide for more rapid advancement of exceptional employees; and reinstatement of a three-year probationary period for new employees. Some of the suggestions still being reviewed include: Resumption of the Civil Service Commission practice of two-grade promotions at the lower professional levels; And preparation of a comprehensive package of recommendations on promotions and improving personnel flow.

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Most of the issues and suggestions I've received focus on personnel practices. I am acutely aware of the need continually to seek to improve our personnel policies to ensure that each of you has as meaningful and rewarding a job as possible; that you know you are a member of the team; and that your contribution is significant and appreciated. The reorganization steps I've taken, as discussed in previous issues of my Notes, and, as painful as it is, the reduction of personnel in the Operations Directorate, are steps intended to contribute to a better personnel situation and fulfillment of our common aims.

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I have been impressed with the Operations Directorate's system of rating personnel by panels as a reasonable and fair way to rank each employee in comparison with his peers. I have asked that this system be considered for the entire Agency. I have also asked that when a promotion list is sent forward for approval, it include how many women and minority employees were considered and were promoted, so I can be sure that they were not overlooked by managers. Other steps I have in mind to improve personnel matters are greater uniformity of procedures; greater visibility to those procedures; increased headroom and promotion opportunity; explicit publication of promotion plans for each grade to each career service; Agency-wide advertising of position vacancies; continued preference for our career people over retirees and other outsiders.

Private

Let me give you some insight into my meetings with groups. Most of my adult life has been spent working largely with able-bodied young men, so when I met with an all-female secretarial-clerical group, a group of women, and representatives of our handicapped employees, these were new experiences for me. Our discussions made me aware of some special considerations which apply to these individuals. For example, why don't we have a day-care center to accommodate the children of our working parents? I understand this is a topic the Agency has considered, that other Federal agencies have such centers, and while I don't promise we will have one, I can promise that the subject is going to be examined carefully.

When I met with the handicapped, it was not long after a fire drill at Headquarters. How does a deaf employee know the fire

bell is ringing if he is in a rest room or other location outside his office? How do we evacuate those employees confined to wheel chairs? Again, I don't know the answers to those questions, but I have asked appropriate Agency officers to answer them.

Each of us has some special problem or concern. My learning about them has helped my understanding of the Agency and stimulated my desire to be sure that each one is considered. As I've told the groups I've met, I can't promise solutions, and certainly not solutions which will please each and every one of you, but I can and do promise my thoughtful consideration of the issues and problems brought to my attention.

One theme which continues to be raised, and one which disturbs and frustrates me, is that there is a lack of communication. My Notes are supposed to go to every employee now, and we have notices, bulletin boards and other ways to communicate, yet there is always someone who doesn't get the word. What can we do to improve our communications? Do you have any suggestions? One of the groups suggested that we develop closed-circuit TV/videotaped presentations. I asked that a study be conducted and have approved this idea and the installation is under way. That may help.

A fundamental element in improving communications, I believe, rests with each manager and supervisor. It is a supervisor's responsibility to keep employees informed of what is going on that affects their jobs, their personal status, and their morale. On the other hand, each employee should take advantage of the opportunities to obtain information and resolve issues -- to ask the supervisor, the personnel officer, or, for more serious problems,

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the EEO officer or a member of the Inspector General's staff.

Contact your MAG representatives, give them your ideas and suggestions, and ask them to keep you informed. (Incidentally, the secretarial-clerical group asked to form a MAG; I approved, and one is being organized by the office of my Executive Secretary.) The DCI suggestion boxes are still around, and you can always send me a note. I want you to hear from me, and I want to hear from you.

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